



Cultural Resource Management Guidelines

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NPS Resource Types

Archeological resources are the remains of past human activity and records documenting the scientific analysis of these remains. Archeological resources include stratified layers of household debris and the weathered pages of a field notebook, laboratory records of pollen analysis and museum cases of polychrome pottery. Archeological features are typically buried but may extend above ground; they are commonly associated with prehistoric peoples but may be products of more contemporary society. What matters most about an archeological resource is its potential to describe and explain human behavior. Archeological resources have shed light on family organization and dietary patterns, they have helped us understand the spread of ideas over time and the development of settlements from place to place.

Cultural landscapes are settings we have created in the natural world. They reveal fundamental ties between people and the land -- ties based on our need to grow food, give form to our settlements, meet requirements for recreation, and find suitable places to bury our dead. Landscapes are intertwined patterns of things both natural and constructed: plants and fences, watercourses and buildings. They range from formal gardens to cattle ranches, from cemeteries and pilgrimage routes to village squares. They are special places: expressions of human manipulation and adaptation of the land.

Structures are material assemblies that extend the limits of human capability. Without them we are restricted to temperate climates, the distances we can walk, and the loads we can carry. With them we can live where we choose, cross the continent in hours, and hurl a spacecraft at the moon. Structures are buildings that keep us warm in winter's worst blizzard and bridges that keep us safe over raging rivers; they are locomotives that carry us over vast prairies and monuments to extend our memories.

They are temple mounds and fishing vessels, auto factories and bronze statues -- elaboration of our productive ability and artistic sensitivity.

Museum objects are manifestations and records of behavior and ideas that span the breadth of human experience and depth of natural history. They are

evidence of technical development and scientific observation, of personal expression and curiosity about the past, of common enterprise and daily habits. Museum objects range from a butterfly collection to the woven fragments of a prehistoric sandal. They include the walking can of an American president, a blacksmith's tools, and the field notes of a marine biologist. They encompass fossilized dinosaur bones and business journals, household furnishings and love letters bound with a faded ribbon. They are invaluable -- samples and fragments of the world through time and the multitude of life therein.

Ethnographic resources are basic expressions of human cultural and the basis for continuity of cultural systems. A cultural system encompasses both the tangible and the intangible. It includes traditional arts and native languages, religious beliefs and subsistence activities. Some of these traditions are supported by ethnographic resources: special places in the natural world, structures with historic associations, and natural materials. An ethnographic resource might be a riverbank used as a Pueblo ceremonial site or a schoolhouse associated with Hispanic education, sea grass needed to make baskets in an African-American tradition or a 19th century sample of carved ivory from Alaska. Management of ethnographic resources acknowledges that culturally diverse groups have their own ways of viewing the world and a right to maintain their traditions.

